DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 264 554 CS 209 291

AUTHOR Singley, Carol J.; Stockton, Kathryn B.
TITLE Merging Discovery and Control: New Approaches to Persuasion and Argumentation.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition (1984).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Advertising; Business Correspondence; Higher Education; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Persuasive Discourse; Political Influences; Religion; Rhetoric; *Teaching Methods; *Theory Practice Relationship; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Advanced Composition; *Legal Writing

ABSTRACT

One new approach to argumentative writing in an advanced composition course uses the creative juxtaposition of rhetorical and psychological theories and behavioristic research. All of the assignments for the course simulate the kinds of writing actually performed in the professional fields of advertising, politics, business, law, and religion. Instead of writing academic papers, students gain genuine preprofessional and interdisciplinary experience by writing the ads, speeches, reports, or legal arguments that would be expected of them were they employed in these respective fields. Persuasion and argumentation are viewed as a continuum of discourse, persuasion being more closely related to the control end of the continuum, argumentation more closely related to the discovery end. The course begins with a focus on persuasion and the theoretical background of Aristotle. This is enhanced with a study of modern psychological theory. Following a study of political persuasion, the course shifts to the forms of persuasion and argumentation that are found in legal, religious, and philosophical writing. Finally, the course considers how religious/philosophical persuasion is almost ideally suited for merging discovery and control--because religious/philosophical questions are largely unanswerable, every time the persuader re-enters the persuasive process, he or she is engaged once more in discovery with the audience. (The appendix includes outlines of three assignments given in the course and a short list of references.) (HOD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Carol J. Singley
Kathryn B. Stockton
Department of English
Brown University

ED264554

Merging Discovery and Control: New Approaches to Persuasion and Argumentation

As teachers of composition we so often say that our writing instruction should have a dual purpose: we should lead students to take creative risks in their writing *at the same time* that we teach them to write with precision and control. In practice, however, most of our courses end up emphasizing only one side of this "discovery/control dynamic." In an advanced course in composition, especially one in persuasion and argumentation, we frequently short-circuit this dynamic when we lead students to discover only those controlling techniques that will successfully influence audience response. In short, in persuasion and argumentation, strategies of control often subsume discovery. In this paper, we wish to take the discovery/control dynamic in a new direction, one which has the potential not only to provide the means for controlling audience response, but also to engender a more honest, reciprocal, exploratory relationship with one's audience.

Our new approach to argumentative writing arises from the creative juxtapositions of established theories: the rhetorical theories of Aristotle, James Kinneavy, and Stephen Toulmin; the psychological theories of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers; behavioristic research on persuasion by Carl Hovland, J.A.C. Brown, and Wayne Thompson; and critiques by George Orwell and Richard Ohmann. We apply these theories in an advanced composition course at Brown

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Carol J. Singley
Kathryn B. Stockton
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 207291

University.[1] This course, designed mainly for juniors and seniors, but open to qualified freshmen and sophomores, is now the most popular writing course at Brown. Its success, we are convinced, stems from a unique combination of theoretical principles and practical writing tasks. All of the assignments for the course simulate the kinds of writing actually performed in the professional fields of advertising, politics, business, law, and religion. Instead of writing academic papers, students gain genuine pre-professional and inter-disciplinary experience by writing the ads, speeches, reports, or legal arguments that would be expected of them were they employed in these respective fields.

Since "discovery" and "control" are central to our model of argumentation, it is important to explain at the outset what we mean when we use these two terms. In composition theory, discovery has commonly been linked to the stage of invention in which writers "discover" what they wish to say about a subject. In persuasive writing, however, we too often confine discovery to a search for techniques that will achieve a desired effect in the reader. When reduced in this way, discovery ends up being a mechanical and often manipulative activity aimed at controlling rather than enlightening the audience. "Control," then, which ought to be the writer's mastery of rhetorical technique (what we commonly bill as the writer's "self-control"), too easily leads to a single-minded drive to manipulate the audience.

In our teaching of persuasion and argumentation we would like to promote the writer's ongoing, open-ended participation in the discovery process; that is to say, a willingness to be changed by one's own discoveries, and a desire to cultivate an honest, reciprocal relationship with one's audience—a relationship in which readers, too, will be led to make discoveries about themselves and the subject under discussion. Given the nature of written discourse, the writer obviously cannot engage in actual dialogue with the audience. Nevertheless, we wish the writer to write *as if*

[1] Tori Haring-Smith originally developed and taught English 14, "Persuasive and Argumentative Writing"; many of her ideas inspired our own and are reflected in the model we are presenting.

engaged in dialogue, if not with others then certainly with herself, re-engaging in the discovery process at all stages of writing. In this way, a writer's search for control leads not to manipulation but to an exploration of techniques that best express her developing meaning.

With these definitions and goals in mind, we begin our course with a focus on persuasion, moving later to argumentation. We do not view these two categories as discreet; rather we see them as a continuum of discourse, persuasion being more closely related to the control end of the continuum, argumentation more closely related to the discovery end. It is important to note that we do not see persuasion–which comprises half of our course–as the deviant stepchild of argument, to be labeled as "logical fallacies" or "misuse of language" as it is in so many writing texts. Persuasion is a common but often complex form of discourse in today's society, demanding well-considered strategies and knowledge of human behavior. When we explore persuasion through Aristotelian rhetoric and modern motivational research, we help students understand these complexities.

Our first theoretical underpinning rests upon James Kinneavy's explanation of the Communication Triangle (1971), an explanation that allows us to work out a definition of persuasion. It is by now a commonplace that persuasive writing focuses on the reader (as opposed to the writer or subject matter). As we proceed, however, we keep before us the ideal of more reciprocal relationships among writer, reader, and subject matter than is usually presumed. The discourse we call persuasion is itself varied, and the diverse types of persuasive writing that we analyze and ask our students to write fall at different points on the discovery-control continuum. Initially, students study the ways in which much persuasive discourse, advertising, for example, tips this balance away from discovery and toward control. They discuss whether advertising is what good writing must be: a process in which the writer welcomes "not understanding" as an opportunity for engaging in discovery (Rubinstein, 57). Persuasive writing in general, they conclude, does not assume this sort of fruitful ignorance on the part of the writer; on the contrary, writers of persuasion project supreme knowledge of their material—even if they do not possess it— and superiority over their audience.

Examining persuasion as a form of control automatically raises ethical questions that should be central to any study of persuasion and argumentation. Is all persuasive writing dishonest? Must advertising manipulate its audience? Is there room in political writing for a more reciprocal approach? We let students probe their own degrees of tolerance and set standards for reasonableness, fairness, and good taste in persuasive writing. This means that in-class analysis of both student and professional writing plays an important part in the course. We continually ask our students: "Do you buy this message? If not, how do you expect other readers to buy it?"

Once students are engaged in the critical tasks of defining persuasion, we introduce our second theoretical underpinning: Aristotle's ethical, emotional, and logical appeals as described in the *Rhetoric*.[2] We first present the appeals as options writers select depending upon their purpose, subject matter, and audience. To prepare for the writing assignment in this section, we analyze twenty-five ads in class, determining their use of the three appeals. Next we ask students to write their own ads for products such as Ban Deodorant or Timex watches. They write three ads for one product, one using an ethical appeal, one an emotional appeal, and one a logical appeal, addressing these ads to magazines with general readerships like *Time* or *People*. Taking the task one step further, students select one of the three appeals and write ads for magazines with more specific audiences; for example, they may use an ethical appeal to sell toothpaste to readers of *MS*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Harper's*. Through this assignment, students learn how to choose suitable appeals for particular products or audiences. Further, they soon realize that the emotional appeal makes up the greater part of advertising. The ethical appeal, which involves the advertiser's effort to project an image of trustworthiness, knowledge, and good will, is also prevalent; the logical appeal, developed by example or enthymeme (Aristotle's terms), appears least often. As we progress from advertising to political writing, we find that the ethical appeal receives greater stress, a finding illustrated by the popular notion that politicians "sell themselves."

[2] James Kinneavy's *Theory of Discourse* (chapter 4) contains an excellent adaptation of Aristotles's three appeals, as well as suggestions for applying psychological research to persuasion.

We then enhance our study of Aristotelian rhetoric with modern psychological theory. Aristotle was an early and important observer of human behavior, but we need more modern theories that take into account contemporary attitudes and values. Abraham Maslow's pyramidal arrangement of human needs (1954) has been useful for this purpose: safety and physiological needs comprise the base of the pyramid; needs for belonging, loving, and regard from others comprise the middle section; and the need for self-actualization comprises the tip of the pyramid. Applying Maslow to advertising, for example, we see how advertisers use higher level needs (such as the need for self-esteem) to sell basic products like food or clothing. Maslow's theory allows us to establish general human needs and motivations, paving the way for an analysis of specific groups of people (young, elderly; educated, uneducated; rural, urban, etc.). This study of audience characteristics permits students to identify those present-day stock arguments—what Aristotle would call "topics"—that would be successful with particular groups. For example, college-educated adults in their thirties are likely to respond well to ads about health or fitness. We also apply research on behavior and attitude change—particularly the findings of Carl Hovland (1953, 1957), J.A.C. Brown (1963), and Wayne Thompson (1967)—to understand why certain approaches and appeals work better than others with some audiences.[3] These findings may be organized and presented so that they parallel the writer's stages of invention, arrangement, and presentation. For example, motivational research aids students in the invention stage by revealing what types of appeals are likely to be successful with people of different IQ's, whether a positive or negative approach is advisable, or how women and men may be approached differently. We also use motivational research to help writers decide on organizational strategies: should they use a climactic or anti-climactic order of presentation? should they present one or both sides of an issue? should they state a conclusion explicitly or implicitly? Finally, research on what factors make a

[3] Because there is a massive amount of helpful but sometimes contradictory information available in the fields of attitude and behavior change, instructors may wish to refer to summaries of research findings such as Karlins and Abelson's *Persuasion: How Opinions and Attitudes are Changed* (1970).

persuader seem credible can help writers with stylistic issues such as persona, voice, and diction.

Turning again to the practical side of our model, we lead students to apply these findings in various assignments that sharpen persuasive skills while gradually demanding greater combinations of discovery and control. For example, in the second unit of the course—political writing—students first analyze political ads and letters. Assuming a persona, they then write letters of solicitation for a political or social issue, addressing different versions of the letter to friendly and hostile audiences (Figure 1). Students also analyze political speeches, observing the range of quality in political writing and the lamentable extent to which some modern-day political writing differs very little from advertising. We have found four political speeches especially useful to highlight the limits of discovery and control in political writing: Frederick Douglass's "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro," Martin Luther King's "Letter From the Birmingham Jail," Richard Nixon's second inaugural address, and Ronald Reagan's first inaugural address. Students also write editorials in this part of the course.

The culminating assignment in this section combines audience analysis, political persuasion, and business writing. In a two- to three-week project, students become members of an imaginary consulting firm that has been charged with investigating a particular political or social issue (in an election year they often "work on behalf of" a particular candidate or referendum.) Selecting a target audience, they then design and administer a questionnaire to determine the audience's attitudes and beliefs. An introduction to survey methods (that of Warwick and Lininger, for example) serves as a primer for this part of the assignment. Students follow their questionnaire with a persuasive message designed to convince the audience of the student's point of view; after they have distributed their persuasive message, they resurvey the target group in order to determine if there has been any change in the audience's beliefs. Finally, they summarize their goals, methods, and findings by preparing an analytical report which conforms to standards for report writing in the field of business (Wilkinson and Clarke offer a useful guide). Students find this assignment highly interesting and instructive. The survey, even though it only approximates the precision

necessary to produce valid results, helps students develop audience consciousness and the ability to ask the right questions. The persuasive message is itself a valuable exercise in political rhetoric and style. But most importantly, since we give them complete freedom in designing their documents, students confront first-hand the tension between controlling audience response and allowing the audience to make their own discoveries and opinion changes. The analytical report, which caps the assignment, involves a creative blend of reporting and persuasion: students must present their material objectively at the same time that they make a convincing case for the value of their consulting firm's work.

Following our study of political persuasion, we make an important shift to consider the more complex forms of persuasion and argumentation that are found in legal, religious, and philosophical writing. These more complex forms can lead writers into greater discoveries about themselves *at the same time* that they are seeking to change audience opinion. What we are proposing in this section, then, is not argumentation as a more "reasoned," more "truth-bound" form of persuasion, but argumentation as dialogue, as a process of mutual discovery in which the writer does not pronounce from on high but re-enters the discovery process even as he puts forward his argument. At the most accessible level, we are reiterating A. M. Tibbetts' suggestion that argumentation is something of a partnership with the reader–"as if reader and writer were standing side by side, inspecting an exotic plant"; we affirm Tibbetts' claim that "at the end of such an exercise in examining an argument, *both* reader and writer may be subtly and forever changed" (93-94). Given, then, that argumentation can be seen as partnership, as dialogue, we as teachers face a dual challenge. On the one hand, we must equip students with the technical skills they need for developing well-reasoned, well-ordered arguments; on the other hand, we must lead them towards the sensitivity, respect and openness they need for shaping their arguments. One answer to this dual challenge lies in a combination of Stephen Toulmin's model of argumentation and Carl Rogers' psychological theory.

The "Kate Flannigan Problem" (Figure Two) outlines the theory and practice we are here suggesting. We should make clear that we prefer Toulmin analysis to syllogism, believing that Toulmin's model is capable of revealing finer distinctions and greater complexities in arguments. Indeed, Toulmin provides writers with something essential–namely, a detailed conceptual framework for analyzing or developing a position. Students do need to know that the various statements of an argument are not all of the same type–some are claims, some are points that both parties agree upon (hence "facts"), some are more general reasons, some are rebuttals, etc. When they understand these various types of statements, they can more easily discern what elements they are missing in their arguments and how they might best order their discussions.

Having found Toulmin's terms to be needlessly complicated, however, we have shaped a series of questions that provide a simplified method of Toulmin analysis. Thus Parts One and Two of the "Kate Flannigan Problem" lead students to a discovery of their own views on a specific problem. The dilemma that we ask students to solve is not a general issue (it is not "nuclear weapons–pro or con?"), but a question of more immediate interest: namely, given some specific facts about a fictitious person, Kate Flannigan, how might one help her to decide whether to delay or proceed with a college education? Students work in pairs for this assignment, taking opposite positions as guidance counselors both advising Kate. Part Two of the exercise, a pre-writing stage, takes students through our Toulmin-based questions, enabling them to develop their respective positions. Finally, Part Three directly involves students in a concern for the readers of their arguments. By reading the partner's answers to the Toulmin-based questions, the student learns to view the problem from a very different perspective, yet one which is also "reasoned" and held in good faith. This debate on paper sets up the conditions for composing a personal letter to the partner along Rogerian lines of argumentation.

Several composition theorists have applied Carl Rogers' "client-centered" therapy approach to rhetoric.[4] According to Rogers, mutual trust and a full attempt to understand one another best

[4] See, for example, Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike, *Rhetoric: Discovery*

promote not only communication but also truth-seeking. Thus he counsels that we must learn to shelve "our very natural tendency to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove" the views of another and *first* attempt to empathize with that other (284-85). This Rogerian approach to argumentation suggests the sort of concerns we ask our students to consider in Part Three, Step Two: however students choose to organize the letter to their partner, they must be sure to 1) take into account their partner's different position and supporting reasons, 2) establish the values they may both hold in common in arguing their different positions, 3) clearly state their own conclusions in light of their partner's objections. The key to writing the Rogerian letter is to express understanding, respect, and areas of agreement with one's partner. We have found in using this "Kate Flannigan" problem, which we think combines the strengths of Toulmin and Rogers in a new way, that students remain in the discovery process as they argue, becoming more "reasonable" and more sensitive thinkers at the same time.

From this section on general argumentation we next move into the more specialized realm of legal argumentation. To help students understand the different components of legal arguments, at least one important legal writing text (that of Brand and White) adapts the Toulmin method for legal analysis. Because students have recently worked through the Toulmin method and understand that arguments consist of different kinds of statements, they are able to grasp the elements of legal argumentation with surprising ease. So much so, in fact, that they are soon able to write closing arguments for a fairly complex, fictitious court case, deciding on the basis of testimony and jurisdiction that we provide whether or not a certain movie should be banned from a local theater.

This legal section of the course is a crucial unit to teach for several reasons. First of all, many of the students who take the course are considering careers in law. This unit, therefore, gives them a chance to see what legal argumentation is about, a subject most students have never studied before. Second, the use and validity of *emotional appeals*, a key issue that first arises in the section on advertising, returns in this section, particularly as we work through sample closing

---

and Change. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1970, chapter 12; and Maxine Hairston, "Carl Rogers's Alternative to Traditional Rhetoric." *CCC* 27 (Dec. 1976): 373-77.

arguments in legal cases. (In the Karen Ann Quinlan case, for example, several of the lawyers used blatant emotional appeals along with legal theory.) Third, although law is a well-respected profession that seems to place a high value on truth and logic, this legal argumentation unit, even more than the sections on advertising and business, raises very troublesome ethical questions. Students invariably ask, "What happened to discovery here?"—for what should be a logical, sensitive, respectful process, dedicated to discovery of the "truth," seems rife with attempts to manipulate the outcome. And since prior to this unit we balanced Toulmin's method of reasoning with Rogers' injunction to stay open to discovery, students find themselves asking, "Is there room for a more Rogerian approach to legal methods?" We welcome these sorts of questions, for they stimulate students to think about our legal system in ways that are intellectually exciting and morally challenging.

We end the course by focusing on one of the most sophisticated ways for writers to engage in mutual discovery with their audiences: the writer's combination of images and ideas. The first part of this unit introduces the student to the general theory and practice of creating an exchange between details and generalizations. In "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell complains that dying metaphors, pretentious diction, and meaningless abstract terms have all conspired to push modern prose towards abstraction and away from concreteness. The remedy for this writing sickness, Orwell suggests, is "to put off using words as long as possible and get one's meaning as clear as one can through pictures or sensations" (138-39). In an important article, however, Richard Ohmann has arrived at a different conclusion from Orwell. Taking the title of his article from Rule 12 in Strunk and White–"Use Definite, Specific, Concrete Language"–Ohmann intentionally argues against his title's advice, claiming that if writers wish to do more than merely describe their own experience, they must use abstractions. An exclusive concern for concrete details, in Ohmann's view, may close off honest analysis of a subject. Thus he counsels that writers must learn to risk themselves by staying with their abstractions long enough to penetrate their meanings. As we earlier balance Toulmin with Rogers, so here we balance Orwell

with Ohmann, believing that fundamentally both men are proposing that writers should *choose* and *relate* words that will make their meanings precise. And we further believe that by teaching students to create an exchange between their images and ideas we are helping them not only to gain greater control over topic and audience but also to remain in the discovery process.

Translating this theory into practice, we spend a substantial amount of time in class "thinking" and "imaging" together. In the initial class we discuss passages from Thomas Wolfe and Shakespeare (Figure Three, Part One), unfolding the ways in which these authors present abstract human emotions through detailed physical images. In their first pre-writing assignment, students attempt some connections of their own. Here the naming of emotions that students themselves experience in spring represents the "abstract" angle to the task. Being an archetype, spring is as much a concept as a phenomenon; and by listing emotions such as joy, freedom, desire, etc., students begin to penetrate what spring "stands for," what it "symbolizes" for human beings. The next step, one which asks students to develop concrete images that they associate with spring, is not difficult. The real challenge lies in step #3–in the students' attempts to link their abstract emotions with their specific images through cause and effect, through metaphor and simile. In the following class, (Part Two), we provide students with additional practice in image-making by discussing three paintings with spring in the title, thus considering how painters suggest abstractions through images. Finally, the essay assignment (Part Three) challenges students to perform a general "wondering" on behalf of their readers as they write an essay which combines specific images and abstract assertions. Of course we also hope to set the stage for their ongoing challenge as writers: the challenge to foster the creative flow between image and idea.

In the second part of our unit on combining images and ideas, we study religious/philosophical persuasion, in which one attempts to convince others of abstract beliefs that may in turn greatly modify their behavior. Our analysis ranges from materials that are highly evangelistic attempts to win audiences (for example, pamphlets and tracts) to more reflective essays and sermons. We again adapt the Toulmin model in order to analyze the different components of

religious/philosophical persuasion, discussing, for example, what count as facts, warrants, and backing in religious arguments. And lastly, we consider how religious/philosophical persuasion is almost ideally suited for merging discovery and control: because religious/philosophical questions are largely unanswerable, every time the persuader re-enters the persuasive process, she is engaged once more in discovery with her audience. For this reason, the final assignment in the course asks students to combine concrete images and abstract ideas in an essay which is broadly moral, philosophical, or religious.

This unit on images and ideas serves as the capstone for our progression throughout the course, for it emphasizes the conviction that grounds our unique approach: namely, that discovery is itself a viable end goal in persuasion and argumentation, *not* simply a means for control. As students write editorials and legal arguments, for example, they see that discovery as well as control has a place in persuasive and argumentative writing. This awareness both changes them as writers and awakens new claims in them as readers: not only do students write in a more engaging, open way, they come to expect the same honesty in the prose they read. Thus, through this combination of discovery and control we believe that we address some of the most pressing ethical and rhetorical questions which arise in the study of persuasion and argumentation.

Figure 1

Political Persuasion: Soliciting Support

In this assignment you will gain flexibility in your use of the three appeals as you compose a persuasive political message. You will also have the opportunity to direct these appeals to friendly, neutral, and hostile audiences.

Part One: Understanding the Assignment

For the purpose of this assignment, assume the following to be true:

1. You are a strong supporter of either The National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) or Concerned Women of America (C.W.A.). These two groups are philosophically and politically opposed. Politically liberal, N.O.W. is supportive of affirmative action programs, equal pay for equal work, and a woman's right to choose. Politically conservative, C.W.A. is supportive of traditional family values, the right-to-life of the unborn, and the return of school prayer. More background about each of these groups is available on reserve.

2. The organization you support has just hired you from hundreds of applicants to help them launch a nation-wide drive. You were hired because of your enthusiasm, your thorough understanding of the group's goals, and your outstanding ability to communicate your ideas persuasively.

3. Your first responsibility is to write letters to residents of your home state, asking them for active support of your organization. This state has been targeted because key issues that involve both groups' interests have recently come up before the state legislature.

4. To help you with your task, the Board of Directors has targeted two types of audiences for you to address:
    a) a select group of individuals who have contributed money to your organization;
    b) a general group who has not identified with your organization in any formal way. These people range from passive supporters, to disinterested citizens, to hostile opponents.

5. The Board of Directors has outlined these goals for your letter drive:
    a) to persuade readers to make a financial contribution to your organization,
    b) to persuade readers to become members of the organization,
    c) to persuade readers to write letters to state and federal legislators in support of specific bills.

Part Two: Developing Your Approach

1. For which group will you work? Make your choice after researching the philosophies, goals, and activities of each organization.

2. What persuaded you to choose this group? What basic values do you share with this group? What makes sense to you about this group's goals and activities? What do you like about the image projected by the group? Make a list of all of your reasons

for supporting this organization. This list will serve as a basis for your letter to the "friendly" audience.

3. Share your list with a partner who has chosen to work for the opposing organization. Compare your partner's list with your own. Can you find any common ground? For example, both groups claim to value the family; both claim to support American women's interests. Make a list of all the points that are common to both groups. This list will serve as a basis for your letter to neutral, uniformed or hostile audiences. Using these common points, your task will be to convince your readers that *your* organization best serves their interests.

   Note: You will have to decide how much focus to give to the potentially "hostile" reader. If you choose to address this group directly, you must explain why the other group's solutions would not achieve the mutually agreed upon goals.

Part Three: Designing Your Letter

1. What kinds of appeals will be most successful with each group of readers? For example, both letters will no doubt include emotional, logical, and ethical appeals, but which of these will you emphasize? How much supporting material, or evidence, should you include?

2. How should you organize the appeals in the letter? Decide on an order that will achieve maximum effect. For example, should an endorsement from a well-known and well-respected leader open your letter (ethical appeal)? What kind of appeal will you use to conclude the letter?

3. What kind of format will be most effective? Should you write a formal letter or an informal letter? Send a handwritten or typed letter? Underline or use colored ink to emphasize certain points? Make paragraphs long or short? Write a one, two, or three page letter? Examine the collection of political letters on reserve–they should give you a sense of the various approaches open to you. Remember to match appeals, organization, and format to the particular audiences you are addressing.

Figure 2

The Kate Flannigan Problem

Part One: Understanding the Problem

1. Consider the following list of facts:

   a. Kate Flannigan has maintained a B+ average throughout her freshman, sophomore, and junior years in high school.

   b. Although Kate upheld this average in the first semester of her senior year, she has just received one B+, two B's, and one C for her second semester senior grades.

   c. Kate thinks she might like to study Business Administration in college, yet she is also very interested in History.

   d. Kate's three closest friends are not going to college.

   e. Pumpernickel College, where Kate has been accepted, is a ten-hour drive from her home.

   f. Kate does not have a boyfriend.

   g. Kate has been offered a special scholarship for her freshman year at Pumpernickel. This scholarship will pay one half of her total expenses for her first year.

   h. In her home town, Kate currently works at a clerical job in a marketing research firm. She could continue in this position on a full-time basis after she graduates from high school.

   i. Kate has four younger brothers and two younger sisters. Brian, the next to the oldest child, plans to major in English when he goes to college; he is two years younger than Kate.

   j. If Kate does not go to college this year, she will have to reapply for the scholarship at Pumpernickel.

   k. Kate is close to her grandmother, who suffered a mild stroke one year ago and now lives at the Flannigan home.

   l. Kate has said that she would like to attend college in the future if not immediately.

2. Now decide which of these two positions you will argue:

   Position A: Kate Flannigan should take some time off before she goes to college.

   Position B: Kate Flannigan should attend Pumpernickel College next fall.

Part Two: Developing Your Position

Try to enter into the interest of this human dilemma by pretending that you are one of Kate's most trusted advisors. How can you help her make a wise decision, one which takes into account the various complexities of her case?

The following questions are loosely based on the Toulmin analysis that we have just been studying. As a first step toward developing your position, please complete parts 1–6 below and write out the answers to all of the questions. Make a xerox copy of your answers (to be given to your partner).

1. What is the claim that you are making? (your claim = position A or B)

2. As an exercise in brainstorming, *without* considering the specific facts of Kate's situation, list some general reasons for a) delaying the move from high school to college, b) *not* delaying this move.

3. Reread the list of facts. Select and write down those facts that you will use to support your position (these facts = your grounds). Some of the facts may be irrelevant to either position.

4. Considering in turn each of the facts in step #3 above, how does each fact support your position? For example, the fact that Kate's scholarship is good only for the upcoming year may support the claim that she should attend college next fall *because it is often wise to seize a present opportunity*. Try to support each of your facts with this sort of general reason. This may take some pushing, as with the following chain of thoughts:

   Kate received poor grades in her last semester of high school.
   Therefore, it seems that she has lost some of her former motivation to study.
   Therefore, Kate should not go to Pumpernickel College in the fall *because students need to be motivated to succeed in college.*

   When you push each fact towards a *general reason*, you establish a *warrant* for each of your grounds.

5. This step may be a bit more difficult than steps #1–4 above. How might you support each of the general reasons that you listed in step #4? For example, what authorities, statistics, or other "outside sources" might support the general statements that "we should seize a present opportunity" (statistics on rising unemployment?) or that "students need to be motivated to succeed in college" (psychological studies?)? Such "outside sources" comprise the *backing* for your position.

6. What major objections to your position do you foresee? How might you answer these objections? (your answers to objections = rebuttals)

   Note: I do not ask you to consider qualifications to your claim–that is, *modalities*– because in this case you must commit yourself to one of two decisions regarding Kate's college plans.

Part Three: Shaping Your Position for a Reader

1. By now you have developed your position in reference to Kate Flannigan's college plans. While you were developing your position, however, your partner was developing his/her own position–one opposite to yours. Exchange a copy of your answers to the Toulmin questions with your partner. Each of you will then possess a written record of the development of your positions.

2. Now your task is to write an essay, *geared for your partner,* according to the methods of Rogerian argumentation. Remember to pretend that you and your partner are Kate's trusted advisors; you may have taken different positions, but together you share a concern for Kate. In your essays to each other you will want to demonstrate respect for your partner's position and a keen understanding of your similar values.

   Your challenge, then, is to argue the position that you developed in such a way that you 1) take into account your partner's different position and supporting reasons, 2) establish the values that you may both hold in common in arguing your different positions— for example, a concern that Kate have a meaningful year (in college or at home), 3) clearly state your own conclusions in light of your partner's objections.

Figure 3

Creating Exchange Between Concrete and Abstract Language

The exchange between details and generalizations presents us with a major writing challenge, a challenge through which we may attempt to develop *flexibility*. To help you stretch your minds and imaginations, we will devote time to "thinking" and "imaging" together.

Part One: Pre-Writing I

A. In-class discussion:

1. At the end of the week you will write an essay on the following question: What happens to the human spirit in springtime? Please keep this question in mind as you complete this week's pre-writing tasks.

2. We will analyze the following passages to determine how each author uses specific images to penetrate an abstract notion: Passage from *You Can't Go Home Again* by Thomas Wolfe and "Spring" song, from *Love's Labour's Lost* by William Shakespeare.

B. Pre-Writing Assignment:

1. What emotions do you experience when the season changes from winter into spring? List as many emotions as honestly describe *your own experience*. Give at least one reason why you experience each emotion.

2. What specific, concrete images do you associate with spring? Develop at least fifteen vivid images from your personal experience or your imagination.

3. Now try to connect your emotions with your images. Two aids for making such connections are a) cause-effect statements (e.g., "The budding of the white birch outside my window fills me with restless expectation"), b) metaphors and similes (e.g., "As the longer days of spring overtake the winter darkness, so joy takes me captive in March"). Create as many of these "connections" as you can.

Part Two: Pre-Writing II

A. In-class discussion:

Perform the following steps in groups of three:

1. Have each group member read his/her answers to questions #1-3 above. Write down all of the similarities between your emotions/images/connections. If two or more of you listed the same emotion (for example, "joy"), what similar or different images did each of you associate with that emotion?

2. Class discussion will follow step #1. We will determine what emotions were most widely reported by class members and what images students connected with these shared emotions.

3. I will show you prints of three different Russian paintings which depict people in specific springtime settings: *A Festive Day in Spring (On a Visit)* by Abram Arkhipov, 1945; *Spring* by Victor Borisov-Musatov, 1901; *Sunny Spring Day (The*

St. Sergius Posad) by Konstantin Yuon, 1910. Each group will work with one painting.

B. Pre-Writing Assignment: Complete steps #2-5 on paper, and make xerox copies for group members:

1. Study the painting *carefully*.

2. Describe the emotions which you think each painting suggests.

3. Describe the details of the painting as thoroughly as you can (colors, light, movement, vegetation, weather, people, facial expressions, clothing, objects, etc.)

4. Now connect emotions with images. How does each artist suggest emotions through the images?

5. Write one well-developed paragraph describing how spring is affecting the people in the paintings' scene. In this paragraph, you should tie emotions to specific images.

Part Three: The Essay

1. Write a 2-3 page essay on the following question: What happens to the human spirit in springtime?

2. I have purposely phrased the question to make you generalize about the "human response" to spring. By now, you have thoroughly examined what happens to *you* in springtime. You also possess the written comments of other students about how spring affects their spirits. In addition, with your group and with the class, you have analyzed the human experience of spring through three different artistic perspectives.

   Although I realize that you have not interviewed all of humanity on this question, I want you to use the specific information that you have gathered in this class (emotions/images/connections) to state something about the human spirit in general. You must decide: a) What emotions (if any) do all human beings tend to share when the season changes from winter to spring? b) What images vividly illustrate these emotions? c) How many emotions should you discuss? How many images? d) How will you connect abstract emotions and specific images in answering the question?

3. Remember:
   a. Use fresh images, metaphors, similes.
   b. Don't let specific details close off analysis.
   c. Don't personalize so much that you move away from the broader concern of the question.
   d. Use *your* experience as a springboard to "the human spirit."
   e. Let your *wonder* show—your essay should be more of a wise pondering on a human mystery than a scientific answer.
   f. Work toward a "fluid exchange" between your abstractions and your details.

Works Cited

Aristotle. *The Rhetoric.* trans. Richard Claverhouse Jebb. Ed. John Edwin Sandys. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909.

Brand, Norman and John O. White. *Legal Writing: The Strategy of Persuasion,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976.

Brown, J. A. C. *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing,* Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1963.

Hairston, Maxine. "Carl Rogers's Alternative to Traditional Rhetoric." *CCC* 27 (Dec. 1976), 373-77.

Hovland, Carl, Irving R. Janus and Harold H. Kelly. *Communications and Persuasion.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957.

_____, et al. *The Order of Presentation in Persuasion.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953.

Kinneavy, James L. *A Theory of Discourse: The Aims of Discourse.* New York: Norton, 1971.

Maslow, A. H. *Motivation and Personality.* New York: Harpers Bros., 1954.

Ohmann, Richard. "Use Definite, Specific, Concrete Language." *College English,* 41 (Dec. 1979), 390-97.

Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language." *Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters.* Vol. 4. Ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus. London: Secker and Warburg, 1968.

Rogers, Carl. *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961.

_____. "Communication: Its Blocking and Facilitation," paper delivered at Northwestern University's Centennial Conference on Communication, Oct. 11, 1951; rpt. in Richard Young, Alton Becker and Kenneth Pike, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970.

Rubinstein, S. Leonard. *Writing: A Habit of Mind.* Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, 1972.

Thompson, Wayne N. *Quantitative Research in Public Address and Communication.* New York: Random House, 1967.

Toulmin, Stephen, Richard Rieke and Allan Janik. *An Introduction to Reasoning.* New York: Macmillan, 1979.

Tibbetts, A. M. *Working Papers: A Teacher's Observations on Composition.* Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1982 (esp. chap. 5).

Warwick, Donald P. and Charles L. Lininger. *The Sample Survey: Theory and Practice.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1975.

Wilkinson, C. W. and Peter B. Clarke. *Communicating Through Letters and Reports.* 8th ed. Homewood, Illinois: Irwin, 1983.